

# PASCAL VONLANTHEN

## Zonemsue

Born in 1957, **Pascal Vonlanthen** lives in Fribourg and has been attending the CREAHM<sup>4</sup> workshop since 1998.

From 2014 he sources the raw material for his work from the texts, titles and illustrations of local printed newspapers (such as La Liberté or 20 Minutes). As an illiterate person with cognitive dysfunctions, he interprets printed typography, ads, weather reports and other illustrations in hand form. In direct opposition to publicity copywriters that produce this type of text and data in an attempt to capture and contain our focus, Vonlanthen copy writes in a way that subverts its intelligibility. A large part of this key period was shown in a solo exhibition at Fri Art Kunsthalle, Fribourg in 2015.

Since around 2018, Vonlanthen has been expanding his practice once again. Continuously based on the appropriation of newspaper prints and other material (posters, flyers, advertisements) he explores various forms and ways to render his sources into different series, each distinctive. In Zonemsue we are showing a group of works that have been created by Vonlanthen mostly between 2018 and 2022. They reveal an evolution of the artist's expression, marked by strong deviations and movements from the typical layout of a newspaper.

In this series he completely travels from block format texts, illustrations or images in those constraints, in order to create bold compositions of pure writing. The reproduced signs are distorted along the lines, repeated, reinvented and joined to create graphic compositions punctuated by undulations and large empty spaces. A visual language that is as minimalistic as it is vibrant.

Thanks to his recognition and the various exhibitions Vonlanthen is participating in, such as at the Tinguely Museum in Basel this spring, or at the Swiss Art Awards, he gathers new printed matter. Consequently he picks new words and sentences from various posters, handouts, invitation letters and other promotional material related to his own shows. We can recognise in some of the new drawings, words that look seemingly to "Tinguely", "Museum", "CreaHM" and exhibitions titles like "Ecrits d'art brut" as well as his own name.

Copying, collecting and transforming existing signs or found elements has been an important cultural and artistic practice in human history and found a very sophisticated application in 20th century artists' collages and media appropriation. We can relate Vonlanthen and his muse to this long history of artists referring to the media, which since the 19th century has been an increasingly invasive presence in everyday life. Furthermore, the artistic act of writing has been a vast territory explored by a variety of artists in the last 150 years. Pascal Vonlanthen's practice owes as much to the gesture of appropriation as to automatic and spontaneous writing, placing him in an unusual lineage that would link artists like Adolf Wölfli (1864-1930), Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), Hannah Höch (1889-1978), dWight mackintosh (1906-1999), Carlo Zinelli (1916-1974), Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008), Isidore Isou (1925-2007), Irma Blank (1934-), Kay Rosen (1943-), Martha Rosler (1943), Sarah Charlesworth (1947-2013), Richard Prince (1949-), Yves-Jules Fleury (1960-) and Raymond Pettibon (1957-), among others.

Vonlanthen understands and emphasizes the presence of elements specifically present in a given context and seizes them deliberately. The work gently arouses critical thought without announcing itself. At the same time it brings to light the contradictions that have shaped our gaze and how we consider art and cultural

production today. Pascal Vonlanthen summons the viewer to take an irreverent look at language and information by placing semantic disorder at the center of a work that is constantly reinventing itself.

Pascal Vonlanthen first institutional exhibition was held at Fri Art, Kunsthalle Fribourg in 2015. Since then, his work has been exhibited in various institutions and galleries, including the Centre d'art contemporain, Genève; Museum Tinguely, Basel; Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne; MAMCO, Genève; DOX Centre for Contemporary Art, Prague; Swiss Art Awards, Basel; Jancou Contemporary, Rossinière among others. His works will be shown at Le Vite gallery in Milano this fall as well as at the Outsider Art Fair, Paris.